



City profile

Bandung City, Indonesia



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ABSTRACT

Bandung City has grown to become a very important centre in Indonesia, demonstrating a higher economic growth rate than the national average. It has experienced many challenges resulting from rapid urbanisation, including slums, basic infrastructures, and flooding. Despite such issues, a gradual improvement of urban development has occurred in recent years. This offers hope and confidence to the entire society living in Bandung for the urban future and its environmental sustainability.

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1. Introduction

With a total of 2.5 million registered residents, Bandung City is the third most populous city in Indonesia after Jakarta and Surabaya (BPS Kota Bandung, 2014). The city serves as the capital of the West Java Province and is located about 140 km from the country capital, Jakarta (see Fig. 1a). Located at 768 m above sea level, Bandung was originally developed as a resort city in the 1800s by the Dutch Indies government, partly due to its rich natural setting and comfortable climate (Voskuil, 2007). Nowadays, Bandung has become a large-scale city with an area of 168 km² and is one of the most important centres for political, economic, and social activity in Indonesia.

During recent decades, Bandung City has been successful in attracting both large domestic and foreign investments to develop various public infrastructures as well as generate local businesses such as tourism, manufacturing, textiles and apparel, pharmaceutical, financial, food, entertainment, and services (Firman, 2009a). The economic boost, rapid increase of the population, and urban expansion, which can be attributed to the tremendous growth in its commercial, industrial, and educational sectors, have brought many opportunities to Bandung.

Bandung City is part of the Bandung metropolitan area (BMA), which consists of Bandung, Cimahi City, Bandung and West Bandung Regency with an area of 3392 km² in 2005 and a total population of 8.2 million in 2014 (see Table 1 and Fig. 1b). The BMA is prepared to have functional linkages with integrated infrastructure services and possible cooperation for city-to-city and city-to-regency level, related to industrial, economic, and service sectors. The cooperative advantage is claimed to give significant influences to the BMA's economic growth that increased 7.83% over a 1 year period (2008–2009).

Despite these positive reports, the economic growth of the BMA has also offered huge challenges for Bandung City to deliver sustainable urban development and to maintain a high quality of life for its citizens. There have been also some challenges regarding coordination between Bandung City and other regions in the BMA.

This profile attempts to highlight the history of Bandung's urban development and examines the key issues facing the city, especially to create a liveable and sustainable urban environment. The rest of this profile is structured as follows. In Section 2, a brief historical overview of the city is provided, followed by its spatial development and urban form in Section 3. Section 4 provides an explanation of the city's economic profile. In Section 5, some key challenges for the city to establish a sustainable urban development will be explained. Finally, the conclusion of this city profile is provided in Section 6.

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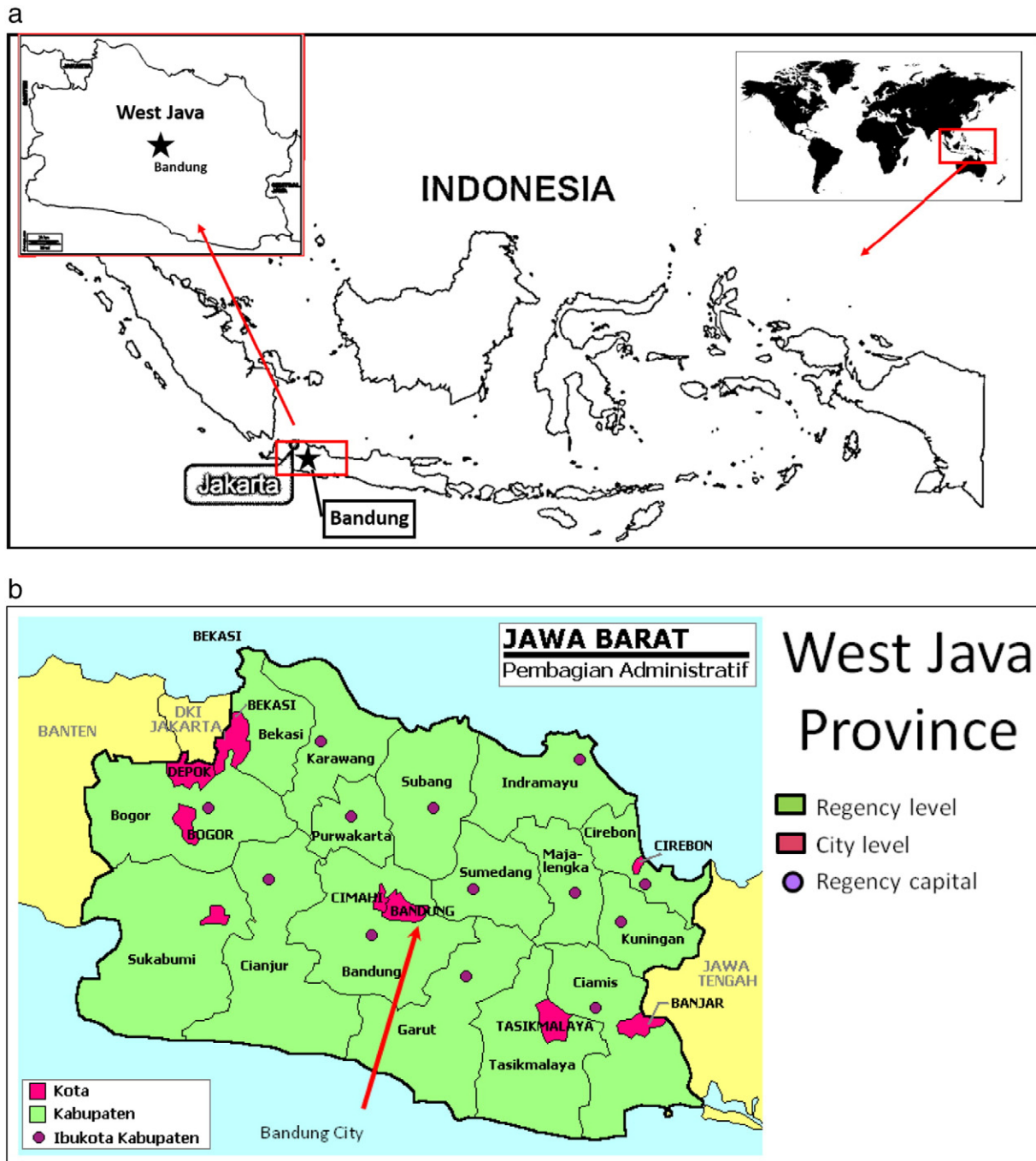


Fig. 1. a, Bandung City in West Java Province and Indonesia (based on various sources, under creative commons attribution licence, 2015). b, The position of Bandung City with its neighbouring cities and regencies (source: West Java Province, with authors' modification).

2. A brief history of Bandung

According to archaeological evidence, the Bandung area is sitting on the basin area formed by a prehistoric lake (Fig. 2) that appeared after the eruption of Mount Sunda, which existed around 55,000 years ago, which then blocked the course of the Citarum River and created a natural dam (Dam, 1994). The area therefore contains highly fertile soil that positively supports agricultural activity. These conditions have since attracted people to come, grow their food, and then settle on a permanent basis.

People have been living in the Bandung area for about 6000 years (Brahmantyo, Yulianto, & Sudjatmiko, 2001). However, the first report of human settlements in the area dates back to the 15th century when

it was part of the Sunda Kingdom¹ which lasted until the late 16th century, when the area fell under the Sultanate of Mataram (Kunto, 1984). During the 17th and 18th centuries, the Dutch East Indies Companies (VOC), who occupied most of the modern Indonesia at that time,² opened big plantations in the Bandung area. These triggered economic activity in the area and attracted more people to settle. For business and

¹ The capital of the Sunda Kingdom was Pajajaran, which is believed to be in the area of present-day Bogor city, around 59 km from Jakarta to the south or around 180 km from Bandung to the north. As it was customary in that period that a kingdom was also called by the name of its capital city, Sunda Kingdom was therefore also known as the Pajajaran Kingdom.

² The Dutch Indies was part of the Dutch government in Indonesia. It became modern Indonesia after World War II.

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